

REMARKS

By way of summary, claims 1-14 were originally filed in the present application. Claims 1, 2, 9, and 14 have been amended, and new claims 15-19 have been added herein. Accordingly, claims 1-19 are pending.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,102,476 to May et al. Applicant respectfully disagrees with the basis for the rejections and requests reconsideration of the claims.

Claim 1 is directed to a chair-side multimedia communication system. The communication system comprises, among other things, a display screen having at least one intraoral operatory light. Nowhere do May et al. teach or suggest such an intraoral operatory light. In contrast to claim 1, May et al. merely disclose utilizing a computer with a seat for comfortable computer use. Col. 3, lines 55-63; see, e.g., Figure 1. May et al. simply do not teach or suggest utilizing an intraoral operatory light.

Moreover, claim 1 further recites that software is configured to enable patient navigation and dental staff access and management of information on a computer network. The present application discloses non-limiting exemplary embodiments of communication systems that advantageously enable both a patient and dental staff to obtain information which can be for viewing while treatment progresses or used as a visual aid in a treatment discussion. Additionally, dental hygienists, dental treatment assistants, and dentists can find this information and its easy access extremely useful. The present application explains that this can be an important tool in giving a patient a better understanding and informed consent about conditions diagnosed, planned treatment, and treatment that is neglected or declined. In contrast to claim 1, May et al. disclose a computer chair having a computer and seat for playing computer games or typing letters. May et al. do not teach or suggest computer use by patients or dental staff, let alone software that is configured to enable patient navigation and dental staff access and management of information on a computer network.

In view of the distinctions discussed above with respect to claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is patentable over May et al.

Independent claim 2 is directed to patient communication system. The patient communication system comprises, among other things, a display screen that has an intraoral operatory light mounted in relation to a patient chair such that the display screen and operatory light are visible from the chair. Nowhere do May et al. teach or suggest such an operatory light mounted in relation to a patient chair. As discussed above, May et al. merely teach a computer chair having a seat and a computer, not an intraoral operatory light mounted in relation to a patient chair as recited in claim 2.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that May et al. do not teach or suggest each and every element of claim 2. Claims 3-8 depend from independent claim 2 and are allowable as depending from an allowable base claim, as well as for novel and non-obvious combination of elements recited therein. For example, claim 4 recites a video camera mounted in association with a display screen and for providing real time imaging. Nowhere do May et al. teach or suggest such a video camera. Consequently, Applicant submits that independent claim 2 and dependent claims 3-8 are in condition for allowance.

Independent claim 9 is directed to a patient communication system comprising, among other things, a display screen and an intraoral operatory light mounted over a patient chair. In contrast to claim 9, May et al. teach utilizing a monitor, not a display screen and intraoral operatory light, positioned over a seat. See, e.g., Figure 1 of May et al. Accordingly, Applicant submits that independent claim 9 is in condition for allowance. Claims 10-13 depend from independent claim 9 and are allowable as depending from an allowable base claim, as well as for novel and non-obvious combination of elements recited therein.

Independent claim 14 recites, among other things, means for providing a sufficient amount of light to illuminate the inside of a patient's mouth for performing a dental procedure when the patient is in the chair. Nowhere do May et al. teach or suggest such a means for providing intraoral light. Consequently, claim 14 is in condition for allowance.

Claims 15-19 have been added. These claims are fully supported by the application as filed. Accordingly, no new matter has been added by this amendment. Consideration of new claims 15-19 is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that all of the claims in this application are now clearly in condition for allowance. Furthermore, any remarks in support of patentability of one claim should not be imputed to any other claim, even if similar terminology is used. Any remarks referring to only a portion of a claim should not be understood to base patentability on that portion; rather, patentability must rest on each claim taken as a whole. Although changes to claims 1, 2, 9, and 14 have been made, no acquiescence or estoppel is or should be implied thereby; such amendments are made only to expedite prosecution of the present application and are without prejudice to the presentation or assertion, in the future, of claims relating to the same or similar subject matter.


Any discussion of embodiments disclosed in the application, and the discussion of the differences between disclosed embodiments and the teaching of May et al., does not define the scope or interpretation of any of the claims. Instead, such discussion is to help the Examiner appreciate the important distinctions between disclosed embodiments and the teachings of the cited reference.

In the event the Examiner disagrees or finds minor informalities that can be resolved by telephone conference, the Examiner is urged to contact Applicant's undersigned representative by telephone at (206) 622-4900 in order to expeditiously resolve prosecution of this application. Consequently, early and favorable action allowing these claims and passing this case to issuance is respectfully solicited.

The Director is authorized to charge any additional fees due by way of this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 19-1090.

Respectfully submitted,

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